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ABSTRACT

Although schools are spending huge sums of money (nearly one billion dollars in 1970-71) on instructional technology, their media programs are disorganized and inefficient as documented in the report of the Commission on Instructional Technology. In the speaker's opinion, effective media programs depend on several factors: choice of appropriate materials, scientific organization to allow immediate retrieval of materials, a "memory bank" of successful media usage patterns, and the "humanizing" of the information retrieval process. This can be accomplished by the development of a quality school library program which develops a library media center and provides a good librarian who is the key to successful media usage patterns and the humanizing of information retrieval. Such leadership comes under the heading of accountability. (JK/MT)

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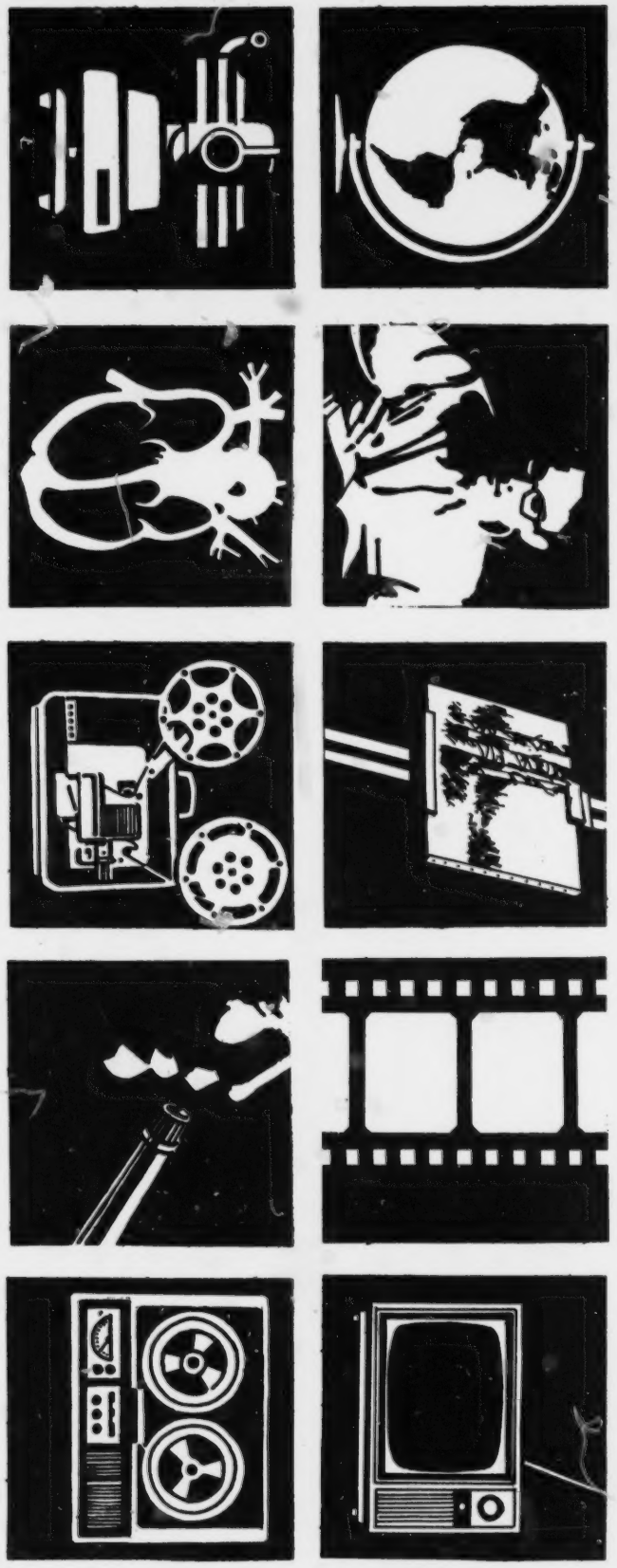
Manpower and Media for the Use of the Minority and the Majority



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MANPOWER AND MEDIA

FOR

THE USE OF THE MINORITY AND THE MAJORITY

By

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Manpower and Media for the Use of the Minority and the Majority

Mrs. Young, members of the panel, and fellow administrators, our topic "Manpower and Media for the Use of the Minority and the Majority" should be of interest to any school administrator who is sincerely concerned for the quality of his school or district's educational program. If you have read the McMurrin report entitled, TO IMPROVE LEARNING, [1] I am sure that you are as troubled as I. This report of the President's Commission On Instructional Technology, released in October of 1970, is an indictment of administrative ineffectiveness. The report proves that in many school districts, instructional media programs are lying around in bits and pieces, unassembled, disorganized, inoperable, and, therefore, educationally abortive.

The McMurrin report gives the impression that school administrators have spent time and energy scrounging for funds for the purchase of material, but have not exerted much effort in developing effective media usage programs. According to the January 1971 issue of SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, school administrators have been extremely successful in getting funds for the purchase of instructional media. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT reports that during the current school year, 1970-71,

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1. Tickton, Sidney G., ed. TO IMPROVE LEARNING, AN EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY. N. Y.: R. R. Bowker, 1970-1971. 2 volumes.

a total of $988,400,000.00--and that's nearly a billion dollars--will be spent for the purchase of teaching materials other than textbooks. This is an average expenditure of $18.84 per elementary student and an expentiture of $24.49 per secondary student. How could any school administrator justify spending that much money, and then not following through to be sure that the materials he bought were being used profitably? Are administrators not like Pontius Pilate if, after they have purchased materials, they wash their hands of the responsibility for seeing that those materials are used effectively? It is imperative that administrators accept their responsibility and address themselves to the task of developing and implementing an effective media usage program in their schools.

This raises the question, "What are the basic requirements of an educationally effective media program?" In my opinion, the first requirement is the selection of APPROPRIATE print and non-print instructional media. By appropriate, I mean those materials uniquely capable of meeting specific curriculum needs, and of meeting student interest and ability needs. May I add, that the selection of appropriate media begins with a thorough knowledge of the educational program, those who select must know what is being taught, how it is being taught, and to whom it is being taught. The second requirement, in my opinion, is scientific organization of instructional media for immediate retrieval. Quick retrieval implies a unified print and non-print media collection indexed either in a book or card catalog. I am partial to a book catalog, for the book catalog makes it possible for teachers and students to have readily at hand an index to a school's or district's instructional materials no matter where those materials be housed.

I have available for your examination a book catalog which indexes by topic, by concept, and by unit the materials in the North Hills Instructional Materials Center. We have found this portable, comprehensive media index to be a most effective reference tool.

William Burton, a leading American authority on the psychology of teaching and learning, decries the continued unscientific use of media. In his book, THE GUIDANCE OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES, Burton stresses the importance of the planned and integrated use of media. In his words, "All instructional aids should be used for SPECIFIC and DEFINED purposes within an on-going series of activities, whether they be assigned to or initiated by the pupils. A given instructional aid should be chosen to serve a direct need of the learner as that need appears in the series of learning activities."(2) In other words, the emphasis should be placed on the purposeful use of materials rather than on the availability of materials.

As early as 1915, Henry Johnson, history professor at Columbia University, saw the need for the planned use of instructional media. He said,

> "Two important pieces of work remain to be done. The first is to prepare a really exhaustive guide to aids especially adapted to American schools. The second is to provide a series of illustrated exercises showing definitely when and how the aids ought to be used. As matters now stand at present many schools seem to be wasting their substance in the acquisition of unsuitable material and wasting their time in unsuitable use even of suitable material."(3)

I agree with Henry Johnson that an accumulated memory of successful media usage patterns and strategies is basic. Therefore, the third requirement of an educationally effective media program, in my opinion, is a "memory bank" of

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2. Burton, William H. THE GUIDANCE OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962. p. 427.
3. Johnson, Henry. TEACHING OF HISTORY IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. N. Y.: MacMillan, 1915. pp. 208-209

successful media usage patterns and strategies. A "memory bank" stores for future recall the specific materials, the specific usage sequences, and the specific strategies which have proven to be successful. A "memory bank" will save future generations of teachers and students from wasting valuable time in the hit-and-miss, trial-and-error approach to using instructional media.

The fourth requirement, in my opinion, is to humanize the information retrieval process--in other words, both to individualize and to personalize the use of instructional media. Solving the problem of getting appropriate material into the hands of teacher and student requires a high degree of skill. Jerome Bruner in his book, THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION, stated that even after course content has been rewritten so that the fundamental ideas and attitudes are given a central role, two basic problems still remain: how to match "materials to the capacities of students of different abilities," and how to "tailor fundamental knowledge to the interests and capacities of the children." (4) Humanizing information retrieval is imperative if the use of instructional media is to prove both rewarding and challenging to the learner.

How can these four basic requirements be met? I believe that there is but one logical and economical answer to providing a totally effective media usage program, and that is, to organize a quality school library program, kindergarten through grade 12. The type of library program to which I refer is not the conventional study-hall reference center. Far from it! The kind of library to which I refer can best be described as a learning laboratory where the planned, guided, and integrated use of media widens, deepens, and individualizes the teaching and learning program. The school administrator wishing to inauguarate an

4. Bruner, Jerome S. THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960. p. 22

effective media program should read Ruth Davies' recent book, THE SCHOOL LIBRARY--A FORCE FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE. (5) This book provides a blueprint to be followed in organizing an effective curriculum-support library program.

I would like briefly to justify my conviction that a quality school library program is the most effective answer to providing a quality instructional media program. First, the selection of APPROPRIATE print and non-print media demands a special kind of "know-how" which is part of the trained school librarian's competence. It is the librarian who, by specialized training, is equipped to relate curriculum support needs--as well as student interest and ability needs--to media examination, selection, and use. The proliferation of instructional media precludes media selection being left to whim or chance. Someone must be delegated the special responsibility for identifying the educational ideas latent in any piece of material, and librarians are expressly trained to do this job.

Second, the scientific organization of media for immediate retrieval demands special competency. Who in the school district, beside the school librarian, has this organizational skill? I recommend that all ordering and processing of instructional media be centralized in one district operation. I have found it to be economical in time, energy, and money to centralize our district's media ordering and processing. A centralized processing service frees the building librarians for full-time work with teachers and students. I believe it is indefensible to waste a librarian's time on clerical tasks.

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5. Davies, Ruth Ann. THE SCHOOL LIBRARY--A FORCE FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE. N. Y.: R. R. Bowker, 1969.

Third, the "memory bank" requirement does not refer to computerized or mechanized retrieval. I am referring to that God-given special human capacity to store and then to recall that which is significant. It is the librarian who serves as the "memory bank," the means of storing up for future retrieval an accumulated memory of successful media usage patterns and strategies. It is the librarian who best knows the ideas latent within the book, the filmstrip, the microfilm, the recording. It is also the librarian who knows not only the best material but knows in what sequence the material has been used most profitably.

Fourth, it is the librarian who, because he is a teacher, senses the need for humanizing the use of media. It is the special province of the librarian to see that the right piece of material gets into the hands of the right teacher or student at the right time. It is also the special responsibility of the librarian to guide the student not only in his search for materials but especially to guide the student in his search for understanding as he uses the materials. It is the special function of the librarian to TEACH the student how to work with ideas, how to use materials intelligently, profitably, and, I hope, creatively. Because the librarian is a teacher, and, because the librarian is the key to humanizing the use of media, no librarian should be required to spread his services so thin that he is ineffective. The 1960 STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS and the 1969 STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL MEDIA PROGRAMS set forth quantitative recommendations for library staff personnel. I believe these STANDARDS are reasonable and justified.

Dr. George Brain, Dean of the College of Education at Washington State University, believes as I do, that developing and supporting a quality school

library program is an imperative administrative responsibility. In his book, INCREASING YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS IN DEALING WITH THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM, Dr. Brain makes the statement that, "The library program in your school will be a creative, dynamic one only if you understand and discharge your obligations to it." (6) In my opinion, your school or district's instructional media program will be a creative and dynamic one only if you, the administrator, will bring to your school library program your administrative understanding, your administrative concern, and your administrative backing. Such understanding, such concern, such backing comes under the heading of "administrative accountability."

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6. Brain, George B. INCREASING YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS IN DEALING WITH THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SERIES. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1966. pp. 52-53.